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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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FROM : American Embassy, HELSINKI
TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
REF : Embassy's A-168, January 14, 1962

366

NO.

January 16, 1962

DATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

17 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION INFORMATION	DEPT OTHER	RM/R	REP	AF	ARA	EUR	REVIEWED BY	DATE
			AGR	COM	FRB	INT	LAB	TS AUTH.	REASON(S)
REC'D 1-17			AIR	ARMY	CIA	NAVY	OSD	ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS	DECLASSIFIED/RELEASABLE

SUBJECT: Controversy over Alleged Agrarian MP Statements on Finnish-Soviet Relations

A new phase began in the controversy initiated by the Communist newspaper KANSAN TAHTO (Oulu 1/) which last week published statements on Finnish-Soviet relations attributed to Agrarian MPs Miilo RYHTA and Johannes (Hannes) PAASO. The paper claimed that these two had made campaign speeches in northern Finland as KEKKONEN elector candidates in which the former had stated that Soviet tanks had been on the way to Finland when Kekkonen set out for Novosibirsk November 22 and that KHRUSHCHEV at Novosibirsk had demanded mobilization of the Finnish Army, and the latter had commented unfavorably on what he had termed the "forced" nature of Finnish-Soviet friendship. Charges of fraud began to fly as both sides took mutually exclusive positions.

President Kekkonen was asked to comment on these alleged statements January 12 during the radio-TV campaign debate among presidential candidates. He asserted that the article was completely erroneous, that he had spoken to persons who had attended the meetings which Paaso and Ryhta addressed, and that Paaso had told him personally that he had never uttered the words attributed to him by KANSAN TAHTO. Communist candidate ATTIO countered with a claim that he had proof that the opposite was the case, and concluded that the whole matter might best be taken up after the elections. The Agrarian MAAKANSA January 14 published two statements by persons who had attended the meetings before which the two MPs reportedly spoke. These statements were declarations on oath that KANSAN TAHTO's charges were untrue. Meanwhile Ryhta denied KANSAN TAHTO's allegations categorically.

On January 14 KANSAN TAHTO rejoindered sharply, pointing out that Paaso had admitted having spoken about the matters mentioned in its article, but had denied having used the words imputed to him. In addition, the paper published two signed statements by people at the meetings in question; these swore that both Paaso and Ryhta had indeed spoken about partial mobilization of the Finnish Army and that Ryhta had spoken about tank columns approaching Finland on the eve of the Novosibirsk talks.

1/ Not Kemi, as reported in A-168 under reference

Eric V. Youngquist/evy

REPORTER

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A biplay to the main controversy was supplied when SOSIALIDEMOKRAATTI January 12 twitted the Agrarians in an editorial concerning KANSAN TAHTO's story. It observed drily: "All this has a very antiquated flavor, however. Why not just as well be modern and say that rocket bases in Petroskoy were trained on important targets in Finland. Wouldn't it have been juicier to have said that the first rocket would land here on Paasivuorenkatu [headquarters of the SocDem Party] and others elsewhere, but in any case one of them to land over there near Tamminiemi...if it is not desired that the master of Tamminiemi [Kekkoneh] be the commander-in-chief of the home troops." MAAKANSA struck back at the Social Democrats for siding with the Communists and "smearing the Agrarians in an unworthy way."

For the Ambassador:

Harvey F. Nelson, Jr.

Harvey F. Nelson, Jr.
Second Secretary of Embassy

CC: AmEmbassy, MOSCOW

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